

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(currently amended)** A disposable diaper, comprising:
 - a diaper body having a top sheet, a back sheet, and an absorbent body enclosed between the top sheet and the back sheet;
 - a pair of side flaps fixed to the diaper body; and
 - a pair of fasteners;wherein the diaper body further has a pair of side edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the diaper body, ~~wherein each of the side edges has a first end and an opposite, second end;~~
 - wherein each of the side flaps extends in a width direction of the diaper body and has an inner end being disposed inboard of a respective one of the side edges of the diaper body and an outer end being disposed outboard of the respective side edge of the diaper body, and each of the fasteners is fixed to the outer end of one of the side flaps; and
 - wherein each of the side flaps is fixed to the diaper body at
 - a fixing part ~~and a joint part, the fixing part~~ being arranged adjacent and along an inner edge of the inner end of the respective side flap, ~~the joint part being arranged adjacent and along the respective side edge of the diaper body~~
 - a first joint part located at an upper part of the inner end of the respective side flap, and
 - a second joint part located at a lower part of the inner end of the respective side flap, the lower part being spaced in the longitudinal direction from the upper part, and the fixing part being spaced, in the width direction of the diaper body, from the

joint ~~[[part]]~~ parts by a bonding-free region; and

~~wherein each of the fasteners is disposed at a region of the side flap extending outwardly in the width direction away from the bonding-free region in which the side flap is free of direct attachment to the diaper body; and~~

wherein a pulling force, which occurs when the fastener fixed to each of the side flaps is pulled transversely outwardly in use, is dispersed into first and second tensile forces directed towards the first and second joint parts, respectively, and concentrated around leg and waist openings of the diaper for enhanced fit of the diaper on a wearer in use.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein the first joint part and the second joint part have a same length, as measured in the longitudinal direction.

4. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein each the side flap comprises an elastic sheet and a non-woven fabric.

5. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein each the fastener is positioned at a substantial center, as seen in the longitudinal direction, of the outer end of the respective side flap.

6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein each the side flap is fixed to the diaper body at the first and second joint parts ~~[[part]]~~ and the fixing part by thermal bonds ~~a thermal method~~.

8. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein each the fastener comprises a fastening member and a tape substrate.

9. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein a length of the first joint part, as measured in the longitudinal direction, is shorter than that of the second joint part.

10. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein a length of the first joint part, as measured in the longitudinal direction, is longer than that of the second joint part.

11. (canceled)

12. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein each the side flap comprises an elastic sheet.

13. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 4, wherein the non-woven fabric is elastic.

14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) A method of adjusting fitting of a disposable diaper about a waist and legs of a wearer when the disposable diaper is worn, the disposable diaper comprising a diaper body and a side flap fixed to the diaper body;

wherein an inner end of the side flap is fixed to an inner portion of the diaper body, and either or both of a side edge upper end area and a side edge lower end area of the side flap are

joined to the diaper body at an outer portion of the diaper body, the outer portion being spaced in a width direction of the diaper body from the inner portion;

the method comprising:

adjusting at least one of (i) lengths and (ii) widths of a first joint part, at which the side edge upper end area of the side flap is joined to the outer portion of the diaper body, and a second joint part, at which the side edge lower end of the side flap is joined to the outer portion of the diaper body; and

fixing a fastener to an outer end of the side flap in a region which extends outwardly in the width direction from a bonding-free region of the side flap, wherein the side flap is free of direct attachment to the diaper body in the bonding-free region, and wherein the first and second joint parts are spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the diaper body by the bonding-free region.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A method of adjusting fitting of a disposable diaper about a waist and legs of a wearer when the disposable diaper is worn, the disposable diaper comprising a diaper body and a side flap fixed to the diaper body;

wherein an inner end of the side flap is fixed to an inner portion of the diaper body, and either or both of a side edge upper end area and a side edge lower end area of the side flap are joined to the diaper body at an outer portion of the diaper body, the outer portion being spaced in a width direction of the diaper body from the inner portion;

the method comprising:

adjusting respective positions of a first joint part at which the side edge upper end area of the side flap is joined to the outer portion of the diaper body, and a second joint part at which the side edge lower end of the side flap is joined to the outer portion of the diaper body; and

fixing a fastener to an outer end of the side flap in a region which extends outwardly in the

width direction from a bonding-free region of the side flap, wherein the side flap is free of direct attachment to the diaper body in the bonding-free region, and wherein the first and second joint parts are spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the diaper body by the bonding-free region.

18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein one of the first and second joint parts is closer to the respective side edge of the diaper body than the other.

20. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein the fixing part extends continuously along substantially an entire length, as measured in the longitudinal direction, of the inner edge of the inner end of the respective side flap, and a length, as measured in the longitudinal direction, of each of the first and second joint ~~[[part]]~~ parts is shorter than half of that of the fixing part.

21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, further comprising:

leg elastic elements extending in the longitudinal direction and along the side edges of the diaper body;

wherein the second joint part of each the side flap overlaps at least one of the leg elastic elements.

23. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 22, further

comprising

~~leg elastic elements extending in the longitudinal direction and along the side edges of the diaper body;~~

wherein the first joint part of each the side flap is located on an imaginary extension of said at least one of the leg elastic elements but does not overlap any of the leg elastic elements.

24. (currently amended) A disposable diaper, comprising:

a diaper body having a top sheet, a back sheet, and an absorbent body enclosed between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a pair of side flaps fixed to the diaper body; and

a pair of fasteners;

wherein the diaper body further has a pair of side edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the diaper body, ~~wherein each of the side edges has a first end and an opposite, second end;~~

wherein each of the side flaps extends in a width direction of the diaper body and has an inner end being disposed inboard of a respective one of the side edges of the diaper body and an outer end being disposed outboard of the respective side edge of the diaper body, and each of the fasteners is fixed to the outer end of one of the side flaps;

wherein each of the side flaps is fixed to the diaper body at

a fixing part ~~and at least one joint part, the fixing part~~ being arranged adjacent and along an inner edge of the inner end of the respective side flap, ~~the joint part being located outboard of the fixing part and arranged adjacent and along the respective side edge of the diaper body, and~~

a first joint part located at an upper part of the inner end of the respective side flap, and

a second joint part located at a lower part of the inner end of the respective side flap, the fixing part being spaced, in the width direction of the diaper body, inwardly from the joint ~~[[part]] parts~~ by a bonding-free region in which the side flap is

free of direct attachment to the diaper body, and the second joint part being spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first joint part by a section of the bonding-free region; and

wherein each of the fasteners is disposed such that the fastener is not co-elevational in the longitudinal direction with any portion of the first joint part and the second joint part.

25. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 24, wherein ~~the at least one joint part comprises:~~

~~a first joint part located at an upper part of the inner end of the respective side flap; and~~

~~a second joint part located at a lower part of the inner end of the respective side flap, the second joint part being spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first joint part by a section of the bonding-free region;~~

~~wherein each of the fasteners is disposed such that an entirety of the fastener is co-elevational in the longitudinal direction with the bonding-free region's section that separates the first and second joint parts in the longitudinal direction; and~~

wherein a pulling force, which occurs when the fastener fixed to each of the side flaps is pulled transversely outwardly in use, is dispersed into first and second tensile forces directed towards the first and second joint parts, respectively, and concentrated around leg and waist openings of the diaper for enhanced fit of the diaper on a wearer in use.

26. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim 25, wherein each of the side flaps extends continuously ~~and seamlessly~~ in the longitudinal direction from the first joint part, across the bonding-free region's section that separates the first and second joint parts, and to the second joint part, without being interrupted by any bonding line or edge of the side flap.